(d) if so, the names of the States where they will be opened?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) At present there are 260 medical colleges in the country.

(b) to (d) The Central Government is, permitting establishment of new medical colleges under the provisons of Indian Medical Council Act, 1956 and the Regulations made thereunder. Any person fulfilling the qualifying criteria prescribed in the MCI Regulations can apply to the Central Government for permission to open a medical college. The essentiality and feasibility of having a medical college at a particular place is decided by the concerned State/U.T. Governments. The Central Government has no scheme for establishment of colleges in various States. However, under the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY), it is proposed to set up one AIIMS-like institution each in the States of Bihar (Patna), Chhattisgarh (Raipur), Madhya Pradesh (Bhopal), Orissa (Bhubaneswar), Rajasthan (Jodhpur) and Uttaranchal (Rishikesh). These States were chosen as they under served in terms of medical infrastructure, high incidence of mortality and morbidity, need for super-speciality services etc. In addition, Central Government has approved the North Eastern Indira Gandhi Regional Institute of Health and Medical Sciences (NEIGHRIHMS) project at Shillong which would be providing PG education in 35 speciality/ super-speciality disciplines.

Female foeticide in Chhattisgarh

3122. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that there are more than 350 Genetic Sonography centres in Chhattisgarh;

(b) whether Government have received reports that these centres are basically doing sex determination tests and foeticides are quite rampant in Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Raipur district of Chhattisgarh; and

(c) if so, what action Government have taken so far to close these centres and whether Government have done any survey to find out the activities of these centres in Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) There are 360 centres/clinics having pre-natal diagnostic facilities registered in Chhattisgarh under the Pre-conception and Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act, 1994.

(b) One of the reasons attributed for lower number of girls per 1000 boys in the age group of 0-6 years is the practice of determination of the sex of the foetus and aborting it if found to be female.

(c) Appropriate Authorities at State, district and sub-district level are empowered with the powers of Civil Court of search, seizure and sealing the machines, equipments and records of the violations of law including sealing of premises and commissioning of witnesses under Pre-conception and Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act, 1994. The violations of the Act is punishable with imprisonment up to 5 year and fine up to Rs. 1.00 lakh apart from cancellation of registration and license. In the States of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, the number of present cases in the courts is 72, 24, 18 and 'nil' respectively.

National Inspection & Monitoring Committee (NIMC) consisting of members from Ministry of Health and & Family Welfare, Department of Women & Child Development and NGO's undertook visits to the State of Punjab & Haryana in May 2005 and to Uttar Pradesh in January 2006. The violations observed were sent to the concerned States for taking necessary action.

Sale of soft drinks in hospital premises

3123. SHRI S. M. LALJAN BASHA : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have issued directive to all Government hospitals to allow the establishment of automatic vending machines for sale of sweetened soft drinks and colas;

(b) if so, the details of such directive and help for sales promotion;

(c) what is Government's interest in promoting the sale of soft drinks of MNCs to sick people; and

(d) the steps proposed to ban the sale of sugared and sweetened colas and soft drinks from all hospital premises in the country?